

2.2.10 WILD HORSES AND BURROS

Wild horses and burros are identified in the NCA legislation as one of the recognized features of the area. The NCA is one of only two units within the BLM's National Landscape Conservation system that contain substantial numbers of wild horses and burros. The presence of these herds provides BLM with an excellent opportunity to provide opportunities for wild horse and burro viewing and development of an appreciation among the visitors of this resource.

Appropriate Management Levels (AML), which are desired population ranges BLM establishes for each herd of wild horses or burros are in place for all but one herd. AMLs must be established or adjusted based upon site-specific monitoring information and are therefore not being changes in the RMP. However the periodic evaluation of each AML must take into account the guidance and decisions contained in this RMP. AMLs allow preservation of a thriving natural ecological balance between wild horses and burros and other values and uses on public lands. The current AMLs and estimated 2004 wild horses and burro populations for each herd are shown in Table 2-5.

Objectives

- To manage sustainable populations of wild horses in nine Herd Management Areas (HMAs) and wild burros in two HMAs consistent with the intent of the NCA Act within established AMLs to maintain a thriving ecological balance among wild horse and burro populations, wildlife, livestock, vegetation resources, and other values and uses.
- To maintain free roaming behavior of wild horses and burros.

Wild Horse and Burro Management

WHB-1: The HMAs referenced in Table 2-5 and shown on Map 2-6 will be retained and the wild horse or burro populations will be managed consistent with plan objectives.

Table 2-5 Herd Management Areas

Herd Management Area (Field Office)	Total Acres	Acres Within Planning Area	% in Planning Area	AML Range	Est. Pop 2004
Black Rock Range East (WFO) ¹	93,438	24,681	26.4	60–93	189
Black Rock Range West (WFO)	93,199	79,919	85.8	60–93	169
Calico Mountains (WFO)	160,822	121,208	75.4	250–333	926
Fox-Hog (SFO) ¹	97,017	16,776	17.3	120-220	578
High Rock (SFO)	94,391	94,391	100	78-120	319
Jackson Mountains (WFO)	283,766	79,891	28.1	136–217	293
Kamma Mountains (WFO)	57,386	3,836	6.7	58–77	120
Lava Beds (WFO)	232,967	4,428	1.9	Horses: 111–148 Burros: 12-16	Horses: 137 Burros: 2
Massacre Lakes (SFO)	39,870	905	2.3	30 ²	94

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Herd Management Area (Field Office)	Total Acres	Acres Within Planning Area	% in Planning Area	AML Range	Est. Pop 2004
Nut Mountain (SFO)	40,214	11,945	29.7	30-55	127
Wall Canyon East (SFO)	41,051	10,726	26.1	15-25	59
Warm Springs Canyon (WFO)	91,708	33,198	36.2	Horses: 131–175 Burros: 18–24	Horses: 398 Burros: 55

Total Acres include all land ownership types within each herd management area.

¹Field Office abbreviations: WFO—Winnemucca, SFO—Surprise.

²AML not set, number is an estimate based upon the Cowhead/Massacre MFP.

WHB-2: The Antelope Range Herd Area as shown on Map 2-6 will not be designated as an HMA.

WHB-3: Contiguous HMAs with documented reproductive interaction will be managed as complexes to enable better management of genetic traits for the population and to improve coordination of monitoring and gathering.

WHB-4: No adjustments in HMA boundaries will occur as a consequence of this plan. However, if subsequent planning adjustments in HMA boundaries associated with the planning area, those adjustments will also apply to this plan.



*Wild horse stallions
defending their territories*

WHB-5: Horses and burros will be gathered from the HMAs to maintain horses and burros within the AML as funding permits. Aircraft will continue to be used for the management and, when necessary, removal of wild horses and burros. Gather activities will be scheduled to avoid high visitor use periods whenever possible.

WHB-6: Gathers in Wilderness will continue to be conducted by herding the animals by helicopter or on horseback to temporary corrals, generally located outside of Wilderness. No landing of aircraft will occur in Wilderness Areas except for emergency purposes, and no motorized vehicles will be used in Wilderness in association with the gather operations unless such use was consistent with the minimum tool requirement for management of Wilderness.

WHB-7: Adjustments in livestock and/or wild horse and burro forage will be implemented in an equitable manner on the basis of monitoring data or site-specific resource evaluations. If monitoring data indicates that impacts on resources are occurring as a result of livestock or wild horse or burro use, appropriate adjustments will be made to the specific class of use. In the absence of monitoring data, adjustments in available forage will be proportional to applicable livestock active animal unit months (AUM) and wild horse and burro AMLs.

WHB-8: Holding corrals may be developed at one or more sites to facilitate gathers, sorting of gathered horses, and to provide opportunities for providing wild horse and burro information to the public.

Note: The Land Health Standards, Wilderness, Vegetation, Wildlife, Special Status Species and Livestock Grazing sections of the RMP contain additional decisions that may affect Wild Horses and Burros in the planning area.